

## **GROUND RULES FOR THE TULARE AND KERN COUNTIES RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

These ground rules are general in nature, and were developed to facilitate the Resource Advisory Committee's (RAC's) flow of business. They are supplementary to the R-5 Charter which functions as the RAC's by-laws.

1. Ground Rules during meetings are as follows:
  - 1.1. Listen to each other and respect each other's views.
  - 1.2. All cell phones and pagers shall be turned off or set in silent mode. Except for emergency communications, RAC members and the attending public are expected to take calls before or after meetings, or during breaks, but NOT during the meetings themselves.
  - 1.3. Come prepared. Do your homework!
  - 1.4. Actively participate in discussions. Speak up!
  - 1.5. Work collaboratively and in good faith. Work toward agreement. If necessary, in a friendly way agree to disagree.
  - 1.6. Bring your sense of humor. Have fun!
2. The Designated Federal Official, Priscilla Summers, will ensure that Forest Service representatives and specialists will be at the meetings where needed.
3. Meetings will start and end on time.
4. The group will use Roberts Rules of Order to order and govern its meetings.
5. The Chairperson, or other member as assigned, will serve as the meeting facilitator.
6. Public comment may be accepted after each agenda topic discussion and before each vote. Discussion and comment from the public will be limited to 15 minutes for each topic (three minutes per person). The majority of the RAC can extend time as deemed appropriate and necessary. RAC members will listen but need not respond to the public comments during the comment period.
7. For projects or topics to be considered which are not on the RAC agenda, or for public comments not pertaining to agenda items, they must be submitted in writing, and the request to speak conveyed to the chair prior to the meeting, preferably by email. At the beginning of each meeting there will be a 15 minute public comment period for these topics NOT on the agenda for that meeting. There will be an upper limit of three persons per topic and three minutes per person addressing the RAC.
8. The DFO will be the contact for all communications and will ensure they are forwarded to the committee chair and the committee as appropriate.

9. Replacement members will attend and have full participation at all meetings, except that replacement members cannot vote.
10. Absenteeism – Two consecutive meetings missed by a member may be cause for removal by the Secretary of Agriculture. Should two consecutive meetings be missed, the Chair will contact the absent member to discuss his/her situation. This could result in a discussion and recommendation from members regarding continued membership by the absent person. Attendance by videoconference or conference phone line will be considered as full attendance.
11. The Forest Service may pay RAC member and RAC replacement member expenses. The transportation reimbursement rate is 37.5 cents per mile; all other reimbursements will be actual expense up to the limit established by federal regulations (usually \$30.00 per day for meals and incidental expenses and \$55.00 per day for lodging). Receipts will be required for lodging and meals. Invited guest speakers will also be reimbursed at the same rates for their expenses.
12. The chair and vice chair will make the call whether bad weather will prevent safe travel to a meeting, and cancel or postpone a meeting if necessary.
13. Meeting locations will be selected by the committee to reflect its geographic diversity and to obtain the best forum for public involvement.
14. RAC meetings will be noticed in the Federal Register and in newspapers of record in Tulare and Kern Counties.
15. The terms of the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair are for one year. Either or both may be re-elected by members of the RAC.
16. The Forest Service overhead assessment rate shall not exceed 3.5% of project costs to cover such direct costs as the US Forest Service RAC coordinator, copies of documents, website maintenance, public notices, and similar costs incurred to support the function of the RAC.
17. Members of the RAC may suggest agenda items no later than five (5) working days before a RAC meeting. The chair has the discretion to waive this guideline.